



CITY OF TUCSON



Ready to Protect
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NEWS RELEASE

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Chief of Police

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Date: 2/7/2012
TDD: 791-2639

GEM THEFT 1031 EAST BENSON HIGHWAY

UPDATE – JANUARY 24, 2013

The Tucson Police Department is pleased to report that after nearly a year of investigating leads and conducting follow up interviews, a substantial amount of gems stolen from a local area motel on February 7, 2012, have been recovered. The investigation was broken as a result of the work of Tucson Police Burglary Detectives Jeff Burton and Janice Carpenter. They obtained crucial information relating to the original theft during an unrelated investigation in November 2012. This information led the detectives to obtain a search warrant for a residence in the 5000 block of East Whispering Sage on January 17, 2013. During the service of the warrant, a large number of the stolen gems and jewelry were recovered and returned to the victims the following day.

On January 22, 2013, a second search warrant was obtained for a residence located at 31 North Los Reales Road. The Tucson Police Department SWAT Team assisted in the service of the warrant. Detectives located thirty to forty more gem stones believed to be related to the original theft that occurred on February 7, 2012. During the service of the search warrant, detectives also located the following items:

- Four hand guns, 3 rifles, and a shotgun
- Over 1000 rounds of ammunition
- Over 100 grams of cocaine
- One and half pounds of marijuana
- Evidence of narcotics trafficking

The residents of this home were not present during the service of the search warrant. No arrests have been made at this time, however the investigation is ongoing and the case will be presented to the County Attorney's Office for review.

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For accommodations; materials in accessible formats; foreign language interpreters; and/or materials in a language other than English, please contact the Tucson Police Department Public Information Office at (520) 791-4852 or (520) 791-2639 for TDD at least five (5) business days in advance. Para arreglos; materiales en formatos accesibles; interpretes de idioma extranjero; y/o materiales en otro idioma que no sea inglés, por favor comunicarse al Departamento de la Policía de Tucson a la sección de Información Pública al (520) 791-4852 o (520) 791-2639 para TDD por lo menos con cinco (5) días hábiles de anticipación.

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This extensive investigation involved many hours of work and dedication by detectives to bring forth a successful conclusion. The Tucson Police Department takes pride in serving our community as well as those visitors that take part in events within our City.

Sergeant Chris Widmer – January 24, 2013

On February 7, 2012 at approximately 7:50 a.m., the Tucson Police Department received a 911 call reporting the theft of gemstones from a trailer at the Motel 6, located at 1031 East Benson Highway. Officers from Operations Division South responded to the location and contacted the victims, who are gem and mineral vendors from Washington. The victims reported that approximately 1,900 gems were stolen from a locked cargo trailer sometime between 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 5, 2012 and 7:30 a.m. today. The victims reported an estimated wholesale value of the stolen gems, described as very rare Oregon Sunstones, to be between \$800,000 and \$900,000.

Detectives from the Burglary Unit responded to continue the investigation at the scene. The gems had been stored inside a locked cargo trailer since the victims had packed up their displays on Sunday evening. This morning, as they were loading up to leave town, the victims discovered that the locks had been cut and the trailer door had been forced open. Several grey duffel bag-style cases and a wheeled suitcase-style bag were taken from the trailer. Each contained several black and glass display boxes filled with gemstones. The stones are unique and rare, including both carved and more traditional faceted stones. The carved stones included free-form carvings as well as some resembling other objects, such as flowers. Some of the faceted stones have "linear-cuts" on the bottom surface in addition to the traditional facets. The stones range in color from reddish-brown to blue-green.

Images of similar stones are included below. These are not the actual stones taken in the incident.

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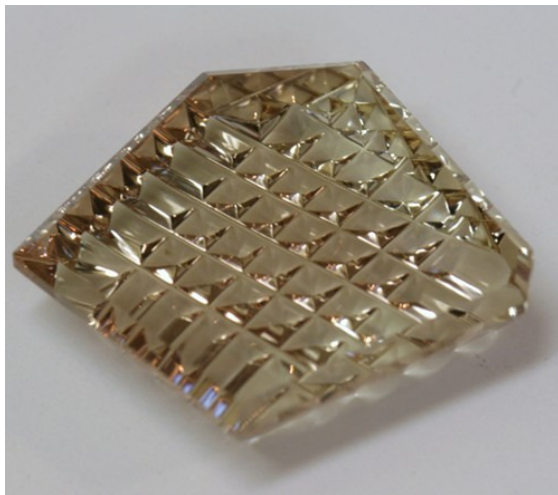
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The Tucson Police Department urges anyone with information about this theft to call **911** or **88-CRIME**.

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